

the required wording was incorporated into this TS by Amendment Nos. 71 and 60, issued by the NRC on February 14, 1995, in response to another amendment request.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated November 8, 1994, and the licensee's letter dated March 14, 1995, which withdrew a portion of the application for license amendments. The above documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Wharton County Junior College, J. M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, TX 77488.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of April 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Lawrence E. Kokajko,**

*Senior Project Manager, Project Directorate IV-1, Division of Reactor Projects—III/IV, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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[Docket No. 030-20457]

**Environmental Assessment: Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing Related to Amendment of Materials License No. 11-27380-01**

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

**ACTION:** NRC plans to issue an amendment to License No. 11-27380-01, authorizing Idaho State University to use carbon-14 (C-14) labeled particulate organic material in dispersion studies in two streams in Idaho. Three streams were chosen with one being a backup location. These are the Bloomington, Deep, and Toponce Creeks, which traverse the Cache and Caribou National Forests and the Curlew National Grasslands. The study calls for releases of 25 microcuries of C-14 at a time, with no more than 100 microcuries used in each stream in a year.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph Wang, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Telephone: (301) 415-7909.

**Environmental Assessment**

*Identification of the Proposed Action*

The proposed amendment action would authorize personnel from Idaho State University to use C-14 labeled

particulate organic material in dispersion studies in two streams in Idaho. Three streams were chosen with one being a backup location. These are the Bloomington, Deep, and Toponce Streams, which traverse the Cache and Caribou National Forests and the Curlew National Grasslands. The study calls for release of 25 microcuries of C-14 at a time, with no more than 100 microcuries used in each stream in a year. The amount of C-14 used in an experiment is such that the radioactivity is "instantaneously" diluted to concentrations below drinking water standards and additional dilution occurs continuously thereafter.

**Background**

Idaho State University (ISU) submitted a letter to the NRC, dated December 9, 1994, requesting to amend its Byproduct Material License No. 11-27380-01. ISU's request is for authorization to use C-14 as radioisotopic tracers to study the dispersal and fate of "fine particulate organic matter" (FPOM) in lotic ecosystems. This study is funded through a grant by the National Science Foundation to the Stream Ecology Center at ISU. Along with its letter, ISU also submitted an Environmental Assessment (EA) for its proposed action based on guidelines provided by NRC's RIV Office.

**Need for the Proposed Action**

FPOM constitutes that bulk of particulate organic matter carried in the suspended matter in streams and is a major component of food webs, energy flow, and organic matter budgets in stream ecosystems. The issues involved in FPOM dynamics cover a range of disciplines, and workers from many different areas, from water treatment engineering to population dynamics of marine organisms, face similar questions about how particles exchange between surfaces and the suspended state. The proposed research by ISU is important to further major advances in the understanding of the ecology of stream ecosystems because it will result in determination of: (1) The detailed dynamics of FPOM transport over a range of flow and channel conditions, (2) the specific mechanisms of transport and deposition, and (3) the relative importance of physical and biological factors in the transport of organic matter in streams.

In its submitted EA, the applicant has considered alternatives to the proposed isotope study. Specifically, two alternatives to radiolabeled natural FPOM have been reviewed for the proposed study: Use of exotic pollen

and use of plastic microspheres. Although both of these options may hold promise for future FPOM research, certain characteristics of each may cause these particles to behave differently from natural FPOM, thus defeating the purpose of the proposed study.

**Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action**

In the EA submitted by ISU, and based on telephone discussion with the licensee, the applicant stated that it's current plan is to conduct approximately two or three releases per year, per stream. The study will be for 2 years using no more than two streams. ISU identified three streams (i.e., Bloomington Creek, Deep Creek, and Toponce Creek) for this study, with the Toponce Creek being a backup location. The releases would be in medium-sized surface waters (i.e., flowing streams having discharge rates of 0.25 to 0.75 cubic meters per second or more) located in remote areas, on Federal lands, miles away from human habitation and domestic animals. Each release would be separated by 7 or more days and involve 25 microcuries of C-14; thus, the total amount of C-14 introduced into any stream in any year would not exceed 100 microcuries. The introduction of C-14 into a stream takes place over several hours and the concentrations in the stream are immediately diluted to 26 picocuries per liter or less at the point of release. These levels are well below Environmental Protection Agency's established drinking water standard of 2500 picocuries per liter for C-14 (40 CFR 141.16), even at the point (and time) of introduction.

The study sites have been selected so that the nearest human residence is located several miles from the study area. The nearest human community is located about 5 miles away in Bloomington, Idaho. No endangered plants or species will be affected by this study. According to National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) Publication No. 45 on Natural Background Radiation, there are 303.3 million curies or 303.3 trillion microcuries of natural C-14 in the environment. Despite this large inventory of natural C-14 in the environment, the average annual whole body dose, due to natural C-14 to an adult member of the general public, is estimated to be 0.7 millirem (page 42, NCRP 45) per year. Therefore, the dose to an adult member of the general public, due to no more than 200 microcuries of C-14 released per year over a predominately remote Federal lands, is insignificant.

ISU has also submitted to the NRC, written responses from the Division of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region X Office; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. All three agencies responded in writing that they have no objections to the proposed ISU study. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service has made available in November, 1994, the submitted EA, for a 45 days public review and comment period.

### Conclusions

Based on the foregoing assessment, the NRC staff concludes that the environmental effects of using C-14 in the proposed ISU stream ecosystems study are expected to be extremely small. Authorizing the study will help to better understand how to preserve our ecosystems. Since ISU's proposed study will be conducted in a predominately remote Federal land administered by the U.S. Forest Service, there is no environmental justice issue in this EA.

Therefore, in accordance with 10 CFR 51.31, a Finding of No Significant Impact is considered appropriate for this proposed action.

### Agencies and Persons Consulted

In performing this assessment and in accordance with the NRC's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards procedure 1-48, the staff consulted with Mr. Steve Oberg, State Liaison Officer with the NRC, Division of Environmental Quality, State of Idaho, on March 17, 1995, at (208) 334-0436. The State of Idaho has no objection to the proposed action. The staff also contacted Mr. Lee Leffert of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, on March 21, 1995, at (208) 236-7534. The U.S. Forest Service informed the NRC that based on comments received on its **Federal Register** Notice, it is preparing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and will issue a Decision Notice authorizing ISU's project implementation as proposed.

### Finding of No Significant Impact

The Commission has determined under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR Part 51, that the proposed action to amend Byproduct Material License No. 11-27380-01 to permit the introduction of C-14 into two streams, if granted, would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact

statement is not required. This determination is based on the foregoing environmental assessment performed in accordance with the procedures and criteria in 10 CFR Part 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions."

For further details on this action, see ISU's letter, dated December 9, 1995, and the attached EA, requesting amendment of License No. 11-27380-01 and related correspondence. These documents (in Docket No. 030-32322) may be examined or copied for a fee in the Commission's Region IV Walnut Creek Field Office's Public Document Room, 1450 Maria Lane, Suite 210, Walnut Creek, California 94596.

### Notice of Opportunity for a Hearing

Any person whose interest may be affected by the issuance of this license amendment may file a request for a hearing. Any request for a hearing must be filed with the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, within 30 days of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** and must be served on the NRC staff by mail addressed to the Executive Director for Operations, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, or be delivery to the Executive Director for Operations, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852; and must be served on the applicant by mail or delivery to Idaho State University, Technical Safety Office, Physical Science 103, 785 South Eighth Avenue, Campus Box 8106, Pocatello, ID 83209. The request for a hearing must comply with the requirements set forth in the Commission's regulations, 10 CFR Part 2, Subpart L, "Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Material Licensing Proceedings." Subpart L of 10 CFR Part 2, may be examined or copied for a fee in the Commission's Region IV Walnut Creek Field Office's Public Document Room, 1450 Maria Lane, Suite 210, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 or in the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street (Lower Level), NW, Washington, DC 20555.

As required by Part 2, Subpart L (10 CFR 2.1205), the request for hearing must describe in detail: (1) The interest of the requestor in the proceeding; (2) how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, including the reasons why the requestor should be permitted a hearing, with particular reference to the factors set out in paragraph (g) of 10 CFR 2.1205; (3) the requestor's areas of concern about the licensing activity that is the subject

matter of the proceeding; and (4) the circumstances establishing that the request for a hearing is timely in accordance with paragraph (c) of 10 CFR 2.1205(c).

The factors in 10 CFR 2.1205(g), which must be addressed in the request for hearing include: (1) The nature of the requestor's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the requestor's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order that may be entered in the proceeding upon the requestor's interest.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 19th day of April 1995.

For The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

**Larry W. Camper,**

*Chief, Medical, Academic, and Commercial Use Safety Branch, Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.*

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### Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

[Docket Nos. 50-390 and 50-391]

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering incorporating an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations in the operating licenses for operation of the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, located in Spring City, Tennessee. Operating licenses have not been issued for Watts Bar; Units 1 and 2 are currently under Construction Permits CPPR-91 and CPPR-92, respectively.

### Environmental Assessment

#### Identification of Proposed Action

10 CFR 73.55(c)(10) requires a license applicant whose application was submitted prior to August 31, 1994, to incorporate a land vehicle bomb control program into the site physical security plan and implement it by the date of receipt of the operating license. Since Watts Bar Unit 1 will seek to obtain an operating license ahead of the schedule by which operating power reactors are required to fully implement the vehicle control measures, the applicant requested, by letter dated November 30, 1994, that Watts Bar be granted the same implementation date (February 29, 1996) imposed on operating reactor licensees to implement the land vehicle bomb control program.